

## "Zen and the Art of Spanking the Races - Good and Proper"

- What is the sound of a one-handed handicapper clapping (?!?) -

Have you figured it out yet - how to beat the races?

Maybe that's the problem - you're still trying to "figure it out." Analyzing and drawing conclusions about a race that you then use to make predictions is kind of like trying to roll a snowball up a sand dune!

So what to do? Throw darts . . . Blindfold and a hatpin . . . draw straws?

Well, no - I suggest you raise your game to a higher level and begin to wager with the clarity and confidence that you are capable of. How to get to that level?

Read on . . .

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### Uncertainty and Risk

There are two reasons why race-betting is 'risky,' and why it is so difficult to predict the future outcomes of races with any definite reliability;

one: Insufficiently known contributing factors,  
two: Unknown acts of human choice.

Can you possibly 'know' all the factors that are going to contribute to the actual outcome of a race? Absolutely not! Many of those factors are utterly unknowable. As the old saying goes, "Anything can happen in a horse race."

Then too - how could we possibly adapt and adjust our handicapping and wagering to the fact that there are other humans attempting to 'control' the outcome of every race? Think about it; racing secretaries who write the conditions of the race, owners, trainers, jockeys, even other bettors - all attempting, in their way, to control the outcome of the race.

Every action in life is a type of speculation and involves some level of risk - driving a car, having a baby, climbing a mountain, taking a shower, eating a meal. You speculate that you will be able to do these things and come out okay even though each contains the risk of death!

Horse racing is also highly speculative and risky (actually not nearly so risky as the common things mentioned above!). Any efforts to change or even ameliorate the risk are efforts wasted. Lack of confidence is your enemy - and lack of focused clarity - not the inherent riskiness of the game you are playing.

Our challenge then is: While accepting the speculative nature of the game, how can we turn the tables forever in our favor?

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Before we get into the meat of this paper, here is a gambler's puzzle you can be ruminating on as you read (answer will be at the end):

Say you wake up and find yourself in hell(!) The devil says he'll let you play a game and if you win you can then go to heaven, but if you lose, you stay in hell for eternity.

If you play on the first day, you have a 50% chance of winning. If you play on the second day, you have 66.7% chance of winning. If you play on the third day, you have a 75% chance of winning - and so on.

The question is: What is mathematically the best day to play?

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## Art and Opportunity

Methods and techniques - handicapping smarts - are secondary to the clarity that you have (or don't have) inside you - let's call it the Risk-Taker's Spirit.

Here is one of my favorite quotes, **"Before you can elevate your personal performance in any area, it must be viewed as an art form."**

Gut check time: Do you ever find yourself 'hoping' or 'wishing' for a good score in the next race? This is not the right mind set. The right mind set is to act from inner clarity. You are an artist observing your canvas - is a touch of blue needed just here, or a swath of vermillion over there?

Picture one of the great artists - let's use who? Gauguin, Van Gogh, Cezanne - whoever. What was it that made them who they were? Was it the kind of paint they used - perhaps a specially designed palette - or some unique type of canvas? Of course not! Yet - today we tend to place an inordinate amount of importance on the 'tools' we use to handicap (computer programs, statistics, spreadsheets,

information products and stats - etc etc.) rather than what's inside us. True art is only minimally reliant on the tools that are used.

**The artistic skill - the trait - most invaluable to the race player is to be free of any emotional attachment to recently made wagers and their outcomes when decision time comes for the next race.**

At the moment of decision-making, can you be free of extraneous thoughts? Can you be free of emotion and desire for that one brief moment? If you can, you are an artist - you are operating from inside "the zone."

Mental clutter is a killer.

If your conscious mind is cluttered with all manner of thoughts . . .

"My wife will kill me if I lose this money / "I love this horse, but I don't trust the jockey" / "The number 5 post has won three in-a-row, will it win again?" / "Speed has been fading all day, maybe I shouldn't bet this front-runner" / "If I hit this one and catch up, I'll quit for the day" (etc. etc. ad naseum)

. . . you won't stand much of a chance of being aware of the real opportunities that arise.

This prevents players from ever reaching a calm moment of decision-making. In fact, it's the brain's way of self-sabotage. It's why the average player does not win in this game, and why they think no one else can either!

I read somewhere that the Japanese ideograph/pictograph for "risk" is translated as, **"Opportunity riding a dangerous wind."**

There is never opportunity (real profits) without risk - anywhere in life. But, do you look at a risky situation with fear and trepidation? Or, do you ride the results of your own best diamond-cut effort - the stroke of the brush that flows perfectly from artist to canvas - with no remorse or regret?

High faluttin' ideas for just common ole horse betting?

Perhaps - but there is another quote that is pertinent here, **"Do what you've always done and you'll get the results you've always got."**



## Optimism and Intuition

The race player that takes the next step up has one over-riding attitude: They 'pre-accept' the results of their next wagers - regardless of whether those results go for or against them. This clears the way for flawless action.

### **Poise is key.**

In the face of a hundred and one things and events that will conspire to put you on tilt, your goal is to simply maintain poise and integrity.

Your base - your basis - your foundation - is not something you got from a handicapping book, a tout sheet, any inside dope, or even from your years of study and dedication to the game. Your base was there before you stepped up to make your first wager - it will be there still after your 'retire' from this game.

Do everything you can and should do prior to the race. Study, handicap, do your due diligence, then when you reach the moment of fate - the 'trigger-pulling' moment - let go of it all and use the same intuition the artist uses: A touch of blue here, or a swath of vermillion over there. Be confident that your art will prevail.

### **Gut-level intuition is what you are striving for.**

Use the sub-conscious mind and have unconditional trust in where it will take you as a handicapping and race-betting artist. Again, this doesn't mean you shirk your commitment to study and preparation - quite the contrary - that is what will allow the artistic intuition to surface. This is your gift - this intuition - you already possess it. You only need to do your work - then get out of its way.

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## Success and Vision

Do you really consider this endeavor of betting the races actually worthy of you and your best efforts? Or - is there still a twinge of shame and/or doubt involved? Does some part of you still hear the voices of the biased many who dogmatically decry the dangers of "gambling," and harp on the waste of money and life it supposedly involves?

You need to become a visionary.

If you cannot see yourself as a successful and artistic race player - you will not become one. We create our worlds. Reams of books have been written on the topic of the power of visualization - from the most ancient of Vedic texts right up to contemporary philosophy.

Understanding the precise 'how' and the 'why' events occur - even for a super-restricted set of events in our lives like horse racing - is impossible. To suggest that we control every detail of our lives is ridiculous, but we can shape and alter our destiny, so that it begins to take on the general color and character we imagine and purposely visualize it will have.

The large majority of people never attempt intentional visualization of any kind. They never set aside daily time to sit in a quiet spot and create strong and clear images of what they want their life to be like. For most, it seems too 'crystal ballish,' and 'new agey.'

There is much proof of our innate abilities to do "extra-normal" things - unexplained feats of strength in moments of crisis - extra sensory perception of events unfolding in another location or in the future - etc.. For us, as race-betting and handicapping artists merely trying to paint our success one brush stroke at a time, bringing that part of our consciousness into play can sway the odds positively and significantly to our purposes.

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### **Commitment and Loss**

Recreational play is one thing, but do not seriously consider starting this endeavor without the full intention of carrying it to successful fulfillment. Do not start without a "free and clear" bankroll that is not scared money. Do not start if fear of loss is still great in you. Do not start it as a lark.

And once you start - never look back.

When you do start - and even if you've been playing the races for 20 years or more consider this a 'new start' - start like this . . .

1. Write down what you want to accomplish - what your goals are for race-betting.
2. Consider - seriously consider - what is the level of your desire? To what level of commitment are you willing to dedicate yourself? Write it down.
3. Now concentrate - how will you get to where you want to be? Write it down.
4. Visualize the possibilities and decide when you will get there - what is your time frame? Write it down.
5. Then, most important of all, are you willing to - NO - are you going to take full responsibility for the results of your actions on this? Write it down - turn it into a statement of purpose to yourself and to your sub-conscious.

I've talked at length in other writings about this, yet it remains the major stumbling block that trips up most players: **Losses are inevitable.**

You will lose - time and time again - that is the reality of the game. If those losses stick in your thoughts, you will not be able to make the next wagering decisions from a clear mind. Your subconscious will not be able to play its powerful part because your conscious mind will be grieving and whining over the recent loss/es. It will throw up so much static and 'white noise' that all intuition will be drowned out.

If "Why me?" and "I knew something would go wrong," and "This always happens to me," and "I knew I should have boxed those horses," and so on and so on - If these kind of thoughts are still with you, you will not succeed. You will constantly be trapped inside a negative inertia that will completely stymie the flow of your energy.

**Anytime a thought like that enters your consciousness - do this . . .**

1. Go for a brisk walk - even if just around room or immediate area (if at a satellite center or the track) - or around your back yard, or around the block (if at home). Don't worry about missing a wager - just do it!

2. Have a "place" that you "go" - mentally as you walk. A place on this earth where you have been happy and experienced peace. It could be a favorite fly-fishing stream - the fireplace at a best-loved ski lodge - under a palm tree on a white sand beach - the swing set where you passed innocent hours as a child - wherever.

It needs to be a place where you have experienced peace and satisfaction - a place where, at least for a few moments in your life, you were fulfilled. Have a detailed image of this place ready. Now, while on your walk, call up this image and bring it clearly into your mind's eye - to the exclusion of all other thoughts and images. Hold this image as you 'walk off your imbalance.'

3. When you get back to your seat and ready yourself for the next wager - **be grateful**. Fill yourself with gratefulness. After all . . .

- you are alive
- the blood is coursing through your veins from your brisk walk
- you are intelligent
- you have a worthy challenge before you
- you have the kind of mind and Risk Taker's Spirit that accepts and is thrilled by this challenge.

Because of these things you must realize that you are one of the most-favored beings on this earth. Think about that as you prepare to wager again. And repeat the thought - for it is an undeniable truth - **you are one of the most-favored beings on this earth.**

## Cycles and Creativity

All phenomenon in this manifest Universe have and conform to cycles; sunspots, tides, glacial activity, the seasons, business, etc.. What is called "chaos" by some is simply a cyclical pattern too profound or on a time scale too grand for our conscious mind to conceive or apprehend.

Contemplate on this often - it contains a key that will open up your race betting - and your life - in positive ways previously unimagined.

Always be open to new and creative ideas, thoughts, and images. This can be your great advantage over other players.

It is said we use only about 10% of our brain's capabilities - 10% !! You can tap into a little bit more of it relatively easily - that's sure - and creative ideas will come to you. Ideas that can be used once - and ideas that can be used long-term. Don't doubt your ability to make discoveries in this game that have never been made before.

Our creative powers are far greater than we know - maybe even infinite!

All potential solutions to the handicapping and wagering puzzle are in your mind. They are not in a book, or a system, or a tout sheet - they cannot be got from friends, insiders, or Ouija boards.

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## Acceptance and Responsibility

Our sole concern is to play the game of race-betting (and the game of life) with a clear and focused state of mind.

Unbiased mindfulness is what we want. Watchful, at times even wary, but always with a happy willingness to accept the challenge and the risk of our actions.

Do not confuse this with foolhardiness!

There are some boundaries that will make themselves obvious - they will be known to you - as will the edge beyond which you should never venture. If, and when, you

sense irreparable financial or psychological damage is at hand - then you'll know that is your boundary. **Beyond that you do not go!**

And this also speaks to the idea of responsibility. Only you can set your own boundaries - no one else will do that for you. The trick is setting them neither too tight nor too loose. Always remember and maintain this mind set: No matter what the outcome of your wagering - YOU are completely responsible.

Looked at in the right way - this will give you a kind of freedom and integrity that is entirely positive. It will put you in a place - mentally and spiritually - that you may never have been before.

When you have accepted ultimate responsibility for your actions, you will never have a reason to feel anger, fear, regret, betrayal, despair or disappointment.

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### **Reward and Self-Worth**

Avoid, at all cost, concentrating on or attaching much importance to the frequency of or the recency of your wins. Do not look at them as rewards at all. They are not. The reward you are striving for is not an individualized thing - it is not short term - and it has only partly to do with money.

Studies done on primates have shown that they become addicted to "random rewards." In a controlled setting, they were given a constant reward for doing a specific action, and it lead to a kind of mental boredom. As soon as the rewards were taken away, the primates quickly stopped doing the trigger action at all.

A second experiment was done where the rewards were given on a random schedule. Since they never knew when the reward would come, they kept performing the trigger action - indefinitely - even after the rewards were eliminated completely!!

Euphoria should be guarded against as well. When you make a major score, you have not, obviously, suddenly become King of the World. Don't let yourself act like you have. Any individual result is not attributable to your canniness or lack of same. It reflects neither positively nor negatively on your skill or your self-worth.

Your assessment of personal accomplishment in regards to race playing should be predicated on your long-term results, and on the precision with which you have met the challenge.



Did you come up with your answer to the devil's game (at top)? The answer is - you should wait an infinite amount of time before playing. The infinite nature of the reward justifies making sure you win the game.

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## Precision and Mastery

Have you ever watched a master Zen archer - or a master Zen painter?

They give complete concentration to the preparations - a keen and profound awareness and concern is put into all movements, choices, and actions preceding the actual shot of the arrow or stroke of the brush. The act itself though - the 'shot' or the 'stroke' (in our case the 'bet') - is made from a clear, spontaneous space.

**The archer does not 'aim' - the artist does not 'paint' - rather, they simply 'let go.'**

The results of their actions then have a life and energy of their own that comes from within the archer and artist, but that has been freed of attachment to results. And the results are of a precision, a purity, and a masterfulness rarely achieved by those archers and artists (and race players) who are overly concerned with and attached to the short term results of their actions.

When you achieve mastery in this game - and you will - you will be operating from a rare place. It is a mental place of realization . . .

You will have pre-accepted that you are involved in a game of risk and uncertainty.

You will have prepared meticulously.

You will sense that you have a true edge.

You will let your arrows fly and you will make masterful strokes - unattached.

You will know anything can happen - and will - but you are not affected by events.

You will be playing the game from the ground of uncomplicated precision.

You will know that the path and the challenge are one and the same.

You are sure that creativity and mastery are within your grasp.

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Cultivate any and all of the attitudes and ideas spoken of above - and combine your new level of mastery with any of the methods you will receive in this **Money-Capping** series (or the HRG Index).

You will then find yourself in a completely new game - a game more satisfying, more rewarding, more exciting, and more profitable than ever before.

Best of fortune - Gary

